

**Senate Library Service Committee
2020-2021 Activities Report
May 17, 2021**

Overview

The committee has met six times over the past year. Its efforts have been focused on operational oversight and in investigations to understand how the library may need to change to better support the academic, research and health care missions of the university. The efforts do overlap to some extent.

Areas of Concern / Investigation

1. *Library Leadership*

Three years ago the University of Pennsylvania announced that they had hired away Stony Brook's Dean of Libraries. Shortly thereafter, the campus announced that Shafeek Fazal had been named Interim Dean.

While the committee understands and appreciates the many reasons for not searching for a permanent replacement, it is concerned about the long term impact of the arrangement on the campus libraries.

One area of concern is that important staffing and budget decisions (e.g. hiring, tenure, promotions, budget) are being made by an individual who is not too likely to live with the consequences of those decisions. Some believe that this situation contributes to the high levels of faculty and staff turnover in the Libraries and in filling vacancies.

The libraries are in need of skilled and experienced leadership in defining a strategic vision to help it navigate through the difficult budgetary climate.

2. *Defining the role of the Libraries in Research Data Management*

Stony Brook needs to figure out how it will make research data available to comply with the requirements of funding agencies and publications. Given the skill and experience of professional librarians in curating collections of data and making them available to its patrons, the committee believes that the library can and should play a key role in supporting this function.

The committee has spent some time understanding how the library supports Research Data Management, and to explore what additional support the library needs in order to enhance services in this area. The committee has also been looking at some special case issues to better understand the needs of the researchers, and how the library can support their needs.

The library has published a research data guide, presents data management workshops, and supports data repositories (via Academic Commons). It consults with researchers in writing Data Management Plans, finding datasets, data storage, data preservation and more. Six librarians contribute some portion of their time to this effort, and the campus contributes about \$50K / year in support of the Academic Commons.

The committee expects to continue its investigation and discussions of this important topic through the Summer and Fall terms.

3. *ARL Rankings*

Stony Brook belongs to the Association of Research Libraries. That organization collects data from member libraries and generates annual reports which rank member libraries based upon about 20 criteria. Those criteria included size of collections, staffing, budget, and circulation. As a consequence of decisions made as long ago as 2008, during the last major financial crisis, Stony Brook has fallen in the rankings. The efforts of the committee to understand these data from a long term perspective are still underway.

4. *The Library in the era of COVID-19*

The COVID-19 pandemic presented many obstacles to the delivery of library services. As an example, the stacks were closed to the public. The committee spent the majority of one meeting and a part of another reviewing the libraries' response to the pandemic. Given the many constraints posed on the staff, the library did better than could have reasonably been expected. For example, the audience for library lectures actually increased over the period.

Lessons were learned and an article was published on the experience by a few of our medical library faculty. "Pandemic-Proofing Your Library: Disaster Response and Lessons Learned from COVID-19, *Medical Reference Services Quarterly*, 40:1, 67-78, DOI: 10.1080/02763869.2021.1873624

5. *Library Faculty and Staff attrition and turnover rates*

The amount of turnover in the ranks of library faculty and staff is significant. The turnover and resulting vacancies cause coverage problems. The committee heard a presentation on the extent and possible causes. More exit interviews need to be done. This is considered by the committee to be a significant issue affecting the service provided to the community.

6. *The Condition of the Library Physical Plant*

The library building is now 50 years old and showing its age. Leaks spring up in several areas of the library. The Special Collections unit is one unit that has had problems. The condition of the library and the environmental issues suggest a lack of interest on the part of the university in maintaining the facility and its collections.

7. *Open Access / Elsevier*

The committee paid particular attention to this topic in the prior calendar year. It is watching developments in Elsevier contracts in other states.

For example, the University of California University of California pushed for an agreement that enables universal open access to all UC research; contains the excessively high costs associated with licensing journals, and restores as of April 1, 2021, UC's direct online reading access to all previously subscribed Elsevier journals and some additional journals to which UC did not subscribe previously. UC had stopped their subscription for a year because the previously proposed terms were unacceptable.

The conditions that SUNY has negotiated with Elsevier currently do not include some journals crucial to the research of smaller departments on the main campus, such as Geosciences. Whether the university will adequately budget funds to maintain access to individual articles as the negotiated terms contemplate remains to be seen.

Periodic Review of Operations

1. Reports of the Interim Dean
2. Special Collections & University Archives
3. Research Data Services
4. ALMA Systems Support
5. Health Sciences Library

Highlights of Meetings

April 19, 2021

- Continuing Discussion of role of the Library in Research Data Management
 - *Kim Berlin presented on "DoIT in Kenya - digital preservation and curation of historic collections and scientific research". Efforts to manage the permanent digital collections of scientific research and historic archives of the Leakey family and of the on-going research activities of the Turkana Basin Institute (TBI) in Kenya*
 - *Discussion of applicability of lessons learned to other campus research activities*
- Special Collections and University Archives Department
 - *Kristin Nytray presented on the special collections of the library and some of the issues that the unit has in delivering services. The committee was impressed with what the unit does with the meager resources it has at its disposal. The sense of the committee was that the unit could use more staff and financial resources.*

March 15, 2021

- Continuing Discussion of role of the Library in Research Data Management
 - *Claire Payne, Web Services and Data Librarian & Jessica Koos, Health Sciences Librarian gave a presentation entitled "Overview of Research Data Services at SBU Libraries". Their presentation focused on the importance of RDM and some of the ways that the library supports researchers' efforts. Some ways the library supports such efforts include:*
 - *Helping to organize information and data resources*

- Building Data Management Plans
 - Providing Repositories
 - Workshops and "how to" block in formation
 - Collaboration with and support of researchers
- Discussion and concerns
 - Only about \$50K per year is budgeted for the Academic Commons
 - Data privacy and HIPAA concerns
 - The need to have RDM as a skill in academic program assessment rubrics. The library's role in this needs to be recognized.
- Update Report & Discussion with Interim Dean of Libraries, Shafeek Fazal

February 15, 2021

- Old Business
- Library Attrition Numbers
- Dean of Libraries Search Update
- New Business
- Future of the Libraries? Are we meeting the campus community needs?
- <https://www.stonybrook.edu/policy/policies.shtml?ID=200>
- Research Support

November 10, 2020

1. Update & discussion of the State of the Libraries with Interim Dean of Libraries Fazal.

Some topics covered :

1. Laptop loan program in partnership w/ DoIT for remote students
 2. "Documenting COVID" online archiving project
 3. Record number of Library interns and volunteers - Career Center "fair"
 4. Two new Open Educational Resources added to Academic Commons
 5. Two week long copyright course offered to faculty on campus for online teaching
 6. Online info literacy course being offered to high school teachers
 7. "Healthy Libraries" community initiative partnering with public libraries
 8. Events and workshops - participation/attendance increased with virtual events
2. Operations during the COVID-19 Pandemic. Topics included availability of SINC Sites. Concerns about participation in online courses violating Libraries quiet zone policies and alternates spaces.

September 15, 2020

- COVID and Library Operations, see: <https://guides.library.stonybrook.edu/operations>
- Work of the committee for the fall:

- Overview of the library's financial health
- Search for Dean of Libraries
- Library Collection Development post Elsevier
- Research Funding for OA
- Discussion of library organizational structure/recruitment efforts with Library's FEC
- Overview of Library Initiatives and Services - Tour the HSL Library, Digital Humanities Lab, Scholarly Communications and OER, Digital Initiatives, Academic Engagement